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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

I THINK, ſir, more than three years are paſt, ſince you began to beſtow your labours on the reformation of the follies of the age. You have more than once hinted at the great ſucceſs that has attended your endeavours; but ſurely, Mr. Fitz-Adam, you deceive yourſelf. Which of your papers has effectuated any real amendment? Have fewer fools gone to, or returned from France, ſince you commenced author? or have fewer French follies been purchaſed or propagated by thoſe who never were in France? Do not women, dreſſed French, ſtill iſſue from houſes dreſſed Chineſe, to theatres dreſſed Italian, in ſpite of your grave admonitions? Do the young men wear

wear leſs claret, or the beauties leſs *rouge*, in obedience to your lectures? Do men of faſhion, who uſed to fling for a thouſand pounds a throw, now caſt only for five hundred? or if they ſhould, do you impute it to Your credit with Them, or to Their want of credit? I do not mean, ſir, to depreciate the merit of your lucubrations: in point of effect, I believe they have operated as great reformation as the diſcourſes of the divine Socrates, or the ſermons of the affecting Tillotſon. I really believe you would have corrected that young Athenian marquis, Alcibiades, as ſoon as his philoſophic preceptor. What I would urge is, that all the preachers in the world, whether jocoſe, ſatiric, ſevere, or damnatory, will never be able to bring about a reformation of manners, by the mere charms of their eloquence or exhortation. You cannot imagine, Mr. Fitz-Adam, how much edge it would give to your wit to be backed by a little temporal authority. We may in vain regret the ſimplicity of manners of our anceſtors, while there are no ſumptuary laws to reſtrain luxury, no eccleſiaſtic cenſures to caſtigate vice. I ſhall offer to your readers an inſtance or two, to elucidate the monſtrous diſproportion between our riches and extravagance, and the frugality of former times; and then produce ſome of the wholeſome cenſures and penalties, which the elders of the church were empowered to impoſe on perſons of the firſt rank, who contravened the eſtabliſhed rules of ſobriety and decorum.

How would our progenitors have been aſtoniſhed at reading the very firſt article in the late will of a grocer! Imprimis, I give to my dear wife, *one hundred thouſand pounds*. A ſum exceeding a benevolence, or two ſubſidies, ſome ages ago. Nor was this enormous legacy half the perſonal eſtate of the above-mentioned tradeſman, on whom I am far from deſigning to reflect: he raiſed his fortune honeſtly and induſtriouſly: but I hope ſome future antiquarian, ſtruck with the prodigality of the times, will compute how much ſugar and plumbs muſt have been waſted weekly in one inconſiderable pariſh in London, or even in one or two ſtreets of that pariſh, before a ſingle ſhopkeeper could have raiſed four hundred thouſand pounds by retailing thoſe and ſuch like commodities. Now let us turn our eyes back to the year 1385, and we ſhall find no leſs a perſon than the

the incomparable and virtuous lady Joan, princeſs dowager of Wales, by her laſt will and teſtament bequeathing the following ſimple moveables; and we may well believe they were the moſt valuable of her poſſeſſions, as ſhe divided them between her ſon the king, and her other children. To her ſon, king Richard, ſhe gave her new bed of red velvet, embroidered with oſtrich feathers of ſilver, and heads of leopards of gold, with boughs and leaves proceeding from their mouths. Alſo to her ſon Thomas, earl of Kent, her bed of red camak, paled with red, and rays of gold; and to John Holland, her other ſon, one bed of red camak. Theſe particulars are faithfully copied from Dugdale, vol. 2. p. 94, an inſtance of ſimplicity and moderation in ſo great and illuſtrious a princeſs, which I fear I ſhould in vain recommend to my cotemporaries, and which is only likely to be imitated, as all her other virtues are, by the true repreſentative of her fortune and excellence.

I COME now, ſir, to thoſe proper checks upon licentiouſneſs, which, though calculated to ſerve the views of a popiſh clergy, were undoubtedly great reſtraints upon immorality and indecency; and we may lament that ſuch ſober inſtitutions were aboliſhed with the real abuſes of popery. Our eccleſiaſtic ſuperiors had power to lay ſuch fines and mulcts upon wantonneſs, as might raiſe a revenue to the church and poor, and at the ſame time leave the lordly tranſgreſſors at liberty to enjoy their darling foibles, if they would but pay for them. Adultery, fornication, drunkenneſs, and the other amuſements of people of faſhion, it would have been in vain to ſubject to corporal puniſhments. To ridicule thoſe vices, and laugh them out of date by Tatlers, Spectators and Worlds, was not the talent of monks and confeſſors, who at beſt only knew how to wrap up very coarſe terms in very bald latin, and jingling verſes. The clergy ſteered a third courſe, and aſſumed a province, which I could wiſh, Mr. Fitz-Adam, was a little connected with your cenſorial authority. If you had power to oblige your fair readers and offenders to do penance in clean linen, for almoſt wearing no linen at all, I believe it would be an excellent ſupplement to your paper of May the 24th, 1753. The wiſeſt exerciſe that I meet recorded of this power of inflicting penance, is mentioned by the ſame grave author, from whom I copied the will above-mentioned:

tioned: it happened in the year 1360, in the caſe of a very exalted perſonage, and ſhews how little the higheſt birth could exempt from the ſevere inſpection of thoſe judges of manners. The lady Elizabeth, daughter of the marquiſs of Juliers, and widow of John Plantaginet earl of Kent, uncle of the princeſs Joan abovementioned, having on the death of the earl her huſband retired to the monaſtery of Waverley, did (I ſuppoſe immediately) make a vow of chaſtity, and was ſolemnly veiled a nun there by William de Edendon, biſhop of Wincheſter. Somehow or other it happened, that about eight years afterwards, ſiſter Elizabeth of Waverley became enamoured of a goodiy knight, called ſir Euſtace Dawbridgcourt, ſmitten (as tradition ſays ſhe affirmed) by his extreme reſemblance to her late lord; though as other creditable writers affirm, he was conſiderably younger: and notwithſtanding her vows of continence, which could not bind her conſcience, and, in ſpite of her confinement, which was not ſtrong enough to detain a lady of her great quality, ſhe was clandeſtinely married to her paramour, in a certain chapel of the manſion-houſe of Robert de Brome, a canon of the collegiate church of Wyngham, without any licence from the archbiſhop of Canterbury, by one ſir John Ireland, a prieſt, before the ſunriſing, upon Michaelmas day, in the 34th of Edward the third.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great ſcandal ſuch an indecorum muſt have given, it is evident from the ſubſervience of two prieſts to her deſires, that her rank of princeſs of the blood ſet her above all apprehenſion of puniſhment for the breach of her monaſtic vows; yet it is as evident from the ſequel of the ſtory, that her dignity could not exempt her from ſuch proper cenſures and penalties, as might deter others from commiſſion of the like offences; as might daily and frequently expoſe the lady herſelf to bluſhes for her miſcarriage; and as might draw comfort to the poor, from taxing the inordinate gratification of the appetites of their ſuperiors: a ſort of comfort, which, to do them juſtice, the poor are apt to take as kindly, as the relief of their own wants.

MY author ſays, vol. 2. page 95, that the lady dowager and her young huſband being perſonally convented before the archbiſhop of Canterbury for the ſaid transgreſſion,

greſſion, at his manor houſe of Haghfeld, upon the ſeventh ides of April, the archbiſhop for their penance enjoined them to find a prieſt to celebrate divine ſervice daily for Them, the ſaid ſir Euſtace and Elizabeth, and for Him, the archbiſhop; beſides a large quantity of penitential pſalms, paternoſters and aves, which were to be daily repeated by the prieſts and the trangreſſors. His grace moreover ordered the lady Elizabeth, whom for ſome reaſons beſt known to himſelf I ſuppoſe he regarded as the ſeducer, to go once a year on foot in pilgrimage to the tomb of that glorious martyr, St. Thomas of Canterbury; and once every week during her life to faſt on bread and drink, and a meſs of pottage, wearing no ſmock, eſpecially in the abſence of her huſband; a penance that muſt appear whimſical to us, and not a little partial to ſir Euſtace, whom the archbiſhop ſeems in more reſpects than one to have conſidered rather as diſobedient to the canons, than guilty of much voluptuouſneſs by his wedlock. But the moſt remarkable articles of the penance were the two following. The archbiſhop appointed the ſaid ſir Euſtace and the lady Elizabeth, that the next day after any repetition of their tranſgreſſion had paſſed between them, they ſhould competently relieve ſix poor people, and both of them that day to abſtain from ſome diſh of fleſh or fiſh, whereof they did moſt deſire to eat.

Such was the ſimplicity of our anceſtors. Such were the wholeſome ſeverities to which the greateſt dames and moſt licentious young lords were ſubject in thoſe well-meaning times. But though I approve the morality of ſuch corrections, and perhaps think that a degree of ſuch power might be ſafely lodged in the hands of our great and good prelates; yet I am not ſo bigotted to antiquity as to approve either the articles of the penance, or to think that they could be reconciled to the difference of modern times and cuſtoms. Paternoſters and aves might be ſupplied by prayers and litanies of a more proteſtant complexion. Inſtead of a pilgrimage on foot to Canterbury, if an inordinate matron were compelled to walk to Ranelagh, I believe the penance might be ſevere enough for the delicacy of modern conſtitutions. For the article of leaving off a ſhift, conſidering that the upper half is already laid aſide, perhaps to oblige a lady-offender to wear a whole ſhift, might be thought a ſufficent puniſhment; for wiſe legiſlators will allow a latitude of interpretation to their laws, to be varied according to the fluctuating condition of times and ſeaſons. What moſt offends me, and by no means proper for modern